OPERATION CAR WASH, LABEL CHANGES AND THE PARTY REALIGNMENT INDICATIVE BETWEEN 2014 AND 2018[1]

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Abstract: The Operation Car wash, or Operation Lava Jato (OLJ), impacted electoral demand and stimulated new strategies by peripheral actors and outsiders. We seek to understand how OLJ impacted demand and how such impacts correlate with supply-side changes in party competition, between 2014 and 2018. To do this, we combined theories about institutional changes in competition patterns and inter-party interaction with theories about political behavior. We carry out descriptive analysis of data, as well as statistical tests of variable association. We saw a loss of medial voters in main parties, associated with smaller parties' success, especially those who changed their labels. However, individual accountability has not been fully mitigated by changing labels, nor by containment strategies via political and electoral reforms.

Keywords: Operation Car Wash; Party System; Party Realignment; Party Labels; Electoral Competition.

1 Introduction

The article aims at understanding how the development of Operation Car Wash (OLJ) impacted electoral demand, and consequently, how such impacts **correlate** with supply-side changes in party competition, between 2014 and 2018. To this end, we analyze the institutional changes in the period 2013-2018 and test the electoral outcomes of parties and politicians affected by the operation. A realignment[4] trend is underway in the Brazilian party system amid events and processes that interfere with the demand and supply of electoral competition. Therefore, we aim to answer the question: how does the OLJ correlate with these transformations?

Our proposal does not aim at exhausting the debate about the impacts arising from the OLJ, nor even at explaining the institutional origins or the social conditions that allowed its occurrence. We intend to analyze, in a panoramic way, the political context that surrounded the operation, as well as the correlations with the party system of one of the most important political events in recent history. Other authors have already produced studies on the OLJ. We highlight the analyses on how the OLJ's law operators favored a "political grammar" that favors the illiberal turn in the country (SILVA, 2020) and on the institutional conditions that enabled the operation

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[4] The realignment is described by Sérgio Abranches (2019) as a verifiable process between 2010 and 2018.

to take place (KERCHE, 2018). We also stress a series of analyses on the impacts of the OLJ on the economy, the Judiciary, the Federal Police (PF), the activities of Congress, and the relationship of the operation with the media, as well as public opinion in the book that Fábio Kerche and João Feres Júnior (2018) coordinated.

Between 2010 and 2018, we verified expressive modifications in the pattern of competition between parties in the political behavior of the Brazilian population, and the appropriation of new media for political propaganda. Concomitantly, there was an increase in party fragmentation, and therefore, in the costs of governability.

The recent rise of right-wing authoritarian populism[5] is related to these changes, both on the supply-side of the political market, in the competitive strategies of political agents, and on the demand side, in the beliefs and attitudes of voters. In Brazil, the changes that caused a prominent right-wing authoritarian movement to emerge present paradigmatic episodes, such as the June 2013 Journeys, the impeachment of Dilma, and the election of President Jair Bolsonaro.

The OLJ, apparently an eminent process in this conformation, is, according to the Federal Prosecutor's Office (MPF), "the largest corruption and money laundering investigation that Brazil has ever had." The name comes from "the use of a network of gas stations and car washes to move illicit resources." It was initiated in March 2014 in the Curitiba Federal Court, investigating and prosecuting criminal organizations, resulting in investigations into corruption at Petrobrás, involving large contractors and political agents (BRASIL, [between 2014 and 2021]). Since its inception, the OLJ has resonated with public opinion and the political class. It is marked by controversies regarding its modus operandi, bringing to light corruption schemes involving politicians from almost all parties, impacting the political system in several ways.

Given the purpose of this article, we sought to combine theories on institutional changes in patterns of competition and inter-party interaction with theories on political behavior (ALDRICH, 2011; BARDI & MAIR, 2010; MACK, 2010; MAIR, 1997; NORRIS & INGLEHART). To do so, we used descriptive analysis of primary and secondary data and statistical tests of association of variables. The database contains politicians involved in the OLJ until the 2018 elections, considering that "politicians" are all those who have ever held elective office. We used data available on the websites of the Federal Supreme Court (STF) and MPF and facts reported in the media. The selection criteria of the politicians followed the parameter of whether they were related to the OLJ lawsuits.

We argue that the strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of the OLJ on the political

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[5] We use authoritarian populism in the terms of Norris and Inglehart (2019): rhetorical style that can serve authoritarian leaders of both right and left, whose discursive strategies seek to delegitimize intellectuals, emphasize collective security at the expense of social change, resort to the defense of the preservation of tradition and way of living, obedience to group leaders, which tends to delegitimize public policy, contradicting science based on "us" versus "them" and aiming to delegitimize the political institutions of liberal democracy. Bolsonaro approaches the wave of right-wing authoritarian populism that gave Nigel Farage relevance during the Brexit campaign, electing Donald Trump in the United States and Viktor Orbán in Hungary.

class were not sufficient to cancel the impact of the operation or to "stop the bloodletting" – the effects, however, were increased regarding the delegitimization of the Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores - PT) and the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff. The OLJ, with the media support, impacted and mobilized feelings and political positions, changing the demand side of political competition. This growing constraint process on the political actors involved in the operation, whether party or politician, provoked more decisive effects than the containment measures. Also, some measurements have accentuated the trend toward political renewal and party fragmentation by stimulating new strategies on the part of peripheral actors and outsiders, causing supply to converge with the new demand pattern.

This article consists of two sections. The first deals with the context of the country between 2013 and 2018, highlighting the role of the June Journeys, the unfolding of the OLJ, the modification of public opinion, and the changes in the party system. The second presents the analyses carried out to verify the correlation of the operation with the change process in the party system.

2 Brazil: the context between 2013 and 2018

The June 2013 Journeys, a paradigmatic point in the Brazilian political scene, were marked by the centrality of the denial of parties and raised to a new level the ability to use social media for political dispute, inserting characters and groups that stood out politically, either by reinforcing the denial of the political elite, or reverberating dissatisfaction and anti-systemic positions, as well as served as a means of the repercussion of the OLJ denunciations and leaks. Also, we describe some results of the operation, such as changes in public opinion and the party system. We present how the new pattern of social media use serves as a tool for political disputes, where discourses of denial to politics are reverberated, emphasizing a pretended renewal, serving as an alternative to parties and candidates who have little or no access to traditional campaign resources. In other words, the section aims at listing factors that impact political demand and supply and that cooperate to changes in the party system, and at the interactions between parties and competing politicians.

2.1 June 2013 Journeys.

The June 2013 Journeys began in the city of São Paulo, initially against the rise in public transport fares, coordinated by the Free Pass Movement (Movimento Passe Livre - MPL). The movement was organized through social media, attracting young people and "many activists, as well as groups of distinct ideological orientation [...] trying to imprint an identity to the demonstrations." Such mobilizations adopted as one of the slogans the "does not represent me," emphasizing "a belief in direct action (via the internet and in the streets) and discredited the basis of representative democracy, the parties, and politicians" (MACHADO & MISKOLCI, 2019, p.

955).

There is no consensus on the consequences of those protests. According to Alexandre Werneck (2019, p. 612), "[...] a complete mapping of the consequences of those protests and those that followed in subsequent years is still to be done [...]", with part of the analyses, until then, identifying a growing neoconservative movement and another part, "[...] echoes of an innovative global movement of large libertarian demonstrations grounded in consolidating social movements [...]".

However, it is possible to locate common points in the different interpretations about the movement: the distrust in the State's ability to fulfill its redistributive function, the increase in indignation due to lack of legitimacy or incapacity of institutional channels, the belief in direct collective action, and the confirmation of the internet and social media as tools that modify, polarize, and make political relations more conflictual (ARRETCHE & ARAUJO, 2017; GONDIM, 2016; MACHADO & MISKOLCI, 2019; WERNECK, 2019).

Political criticism can follow the civic approach or the inspired[6] approach. By making use of mockery or absurdity, the inspired approach criticism can become as or more effective than the civic approach criticism, which relies on evidence to justify itself (WERNECK, 2019). Ridicule, as a modality of political criticism, was one of the strategies used in 2013 and connects with the language of the internet, especially social media, through memes and other resources to favor its dissemination, aiming at the "weakening of the criticized side by its reduction to ridicule" (WERNECK, 2019, p. 616).

The feedback from the streets in the June 2013 Journeys and social media inaugurated a dialectical process that supported the impeachment demonstrations and the consolidation of movements and personalities that stood out politically after 2016. The indignation expressed in 2013 found in the OLJ a reverberation for the diffuse feeling of dissatisfaction and disbelief in institutions, and the sense of widespread corruption, supported by the media and internet organizations. It was absorbed and taken advantage of by groups like **Instituto Millenium, Movimento Brasil Livre (MBL), Endireita Brasil, Revoltados OnLine**, and **Vem pra Rua** that already in the 2016 municipal elections, presented candidacies, taking advantage of the publicity accumulated in the years of demonstrations (MACHADO & MISKOLCI, 2019; SOUZA, 2016).

2.2 Operation Lava Jato and its unfoldings

The OLJ has "unfoldings in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and the Federal District." There were 119 charges filed, 116 criminal actions, 165 convicted, 49 collaboration agreements, 14

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[6] The civic approach seeks public denunciation as an expression of collective interest, which requires evidence. The inspired approach presents criticism in a facetious way based on the singularized expression, which does not demand evidence and resorts to ridicule aiming to naturalize negative elements (WERNECK, 2019).

leniency agreements, and 70 operations in Curitiba; 56 complaints, 56 criminal actions, 41 convictions, 37 collaboration agreements, 03 leniency agreements, and 39 operations in Rio de Janeiro; 09 complaints filed, 09 criminal actions, 04 convicted, 10 collaboration agreements, 02 leniency agreements, and 06 operations in São Paulo.

According to Cunha et al (2018, p. 12), the Brazilian legal and police apparatus has received impetus to constitute itself in:

> [...] instances of veto and deconstruction of policies, and initiatives to carry out the constitutional project [...] to the point of conditioning the political process (not just the electoral one) that the Judiciary itself, the Public Ministry, and the police have become political arenas, housing actors who, only very indirectly, are subject to democratic electoral controls, but who inversely act decisively in other political arenas.

Part of the denunciation of the previous paragraph is in the gestation of the OLJ, as much as it has in the operation a reverberation. The numbers used as propaganda serve as accountability and amplify the disbelief in the political system. Given this scenario, the OLJ found a sui generis moment of growing dissatisfaction, especially from the 2013 protests and the economic crisis that foreshadowed the exhaustion of the commodity cycle, allowing the adoption of controversial practices by the agents of the operation, if considered the current legal system in the country. However, the modus operandis of the operation cannot be assessed as a detour. In 2004, the former judge, Sérgio Moro, published an article about Operation Mani Pulite[7] in which it is possible to verify the details and the defense of the procedures. Concerning the arrest of Mario Chiesa, which inaugurates Mani Pulite, Sergio Moro states: "his initial collaboration generated a virtuous circle that led to new arrests and confessions" (MORO, 2004, p. 58). Moro defends the occurrence of imprisonment only if it is justified; isolation would only be carried out "to the extent that it is permitted by law" and separate interrogation "is an investigation technique that is protected even by Brazilian law." About denouncement, he reverses the argument: silence would be morally condemnable in the existence of "just and democratic" laws, being necessary "due care for the confirmation of facts" (MORO, 2004, p. 58).

For Moro, the "reduced incidence of turning state's evidence in the Brazilian judicial practice" is related to "the inefficiency of criminal justice" and the media coverage allows "alerting the potential investigated about the mass of information in the hands of the magistrates, favoring new confessions and collaborations," as well as he remembers that in Italy "it guaranteed the support of public opinion to lawsuits, preventing the investigated authorities to obstruct the work of the magistrates." He considers that "care should be taken to disclose the facts concerning the investigation and not the abstract prohibition of disclosure, since publicity has legitimate

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[7] Operation Mani Pulite or Operation Clean Hands was a major operation carried out in Italy, beginning in 1992, with an intense impact on the political system as a whole. It had effects on the party system, impacting the effective number of parties and the number of parties in parliament, whose participation of the five main parties went from 53.1% to 13.8% (RICCI, 2006).

objectives that cannot be achieved by other means" (MORO, 2004, p. 59).

The former judge questioned the "effectiveness of the judicial system against 'white collar' crimes and argued "the **excessively liberal** Brazilian construction is not a necessary result of the principle of the presumption of innocence," therefore, the Italian way would be welcome and there would be, in Brazil, "several of the institutional conditions necessary for carrying out a similar lawsuit," such as disbelief in the political class and the "significant formal independence from politicians" of the Department of Public Prosecution (MP) and the Judiciary, despite regretting the extension of jurisdiction in the country (MORO, 2004, p. 61, **emphasis added**).

In short, imprisonment, denouncement/confessions, and publicity form the tripod defended by Sérgio Moro, ten years before Car Wash became a reality. Moro was aware of the controversy of such procedures in the Brazilian legal system and warned, in note number six: "it is necessary to clarify that, in Italy, judges and public prosecutors (members of the MP) make up the same career" (MORO, 2004, p. 62). The contents released by Letícia Duarte and The Intercept Brasil (2020), known as "Vaza-Jato," raise doubts as to whether this difference in rights was indeed respected as a difference in the OLJ.

Fábio Kerche (2018) argues the occurrence of an "Italianization" from the institutional point of view and strategies for the judicialization of the fight against corruption in Brazil through criminal action in the ordinary instance. This "Italianization" occurred for the following reasons: (1) by tacit agreements between the OLJ actors, (2) changes in legislation by legislative initiative or by decisions of the STF, and (3) strategies inspired by Operation Mani Pulite (KERCHE, 2018, p. 259-261).

The tacit agreements between the main actors of the OLJ, the PF, the MP, and the Judiciary, allowed the MP to act in the criminal sphere from the beginning of the operation, replacing the model that advocated the overlap and competition of these bodies (the PF investigates, the MP denounces, and the Judiciary decides) for a cooperation model. Also, federal actors have taken precedence in anti-corruption activities over state ones. We also had changes in the legislation, Law No. 12,850/13 (Turns State's Evidence Law) and the authorization given by the STF, in 2015, so that MP conducts criminal actions. Here, the leniency program incentives in Italy had both the institute of "turns state's evidence" and the leniency agreements for companies, while the leaks to the media fulfilled the role of obtaining the popular support necessary to consolidate the operation (KERCHE, 2018).

For Moro (2004, p. 58-61), "the legal action against corruption is only effective with the support of democracy." The fact is that when mentioning democracy, Moro is only referring to obtaining popular support. However, the MP went out of "democratic control" from these "tacit agreements" and these changes in legislation, between 2003 and 2016, weakening the checks and balances (KERCHE, 2018, p. 267).

Despite little impact on legislative activities in the National Congress and the "operating

conditions of the Legislative," the strong presence in the media created a political environment that, among others, favored the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff (BRAGA, CONTRERA & CASSOTTA, 2018, p. 194). Furthermore, it is possible to verify a chain of reactions from the political elite to the impacts of the OLJ.

Between May 23 and 26, 2016, the press published a series of dialogues between Sérgio Machado, former president of Transpetro and the PMDB leaders, Romero Jucá, José Sarney, and Renan Calheiros. The expression "stop the bleeding," uttered by Jucá, became famous, referring to the need to curb the impetus of the OLJ. To this end, the conversations, allegedly recorded in March 2016 by Machado, despite of his interlocutors, dealt with the urgency of a "great national agreement," including the STF (VALENTE, 2016). In another conversation between Renan Calheiros and Machado, the theme of political reform comes to the fore, together with leniency and turns state's evidence agreements:

> RENAN – But what needs to be done, there are only three things: political reform, on those two points, the end of prohibition...
> MACHADO – [Interrupting] There are five points: [...]
> RENAN – List voting is important. [inaudible] You can only do denouncement... You can only do it free, you can't do it in jail. That's one way, and the whole society understands that's torture. [...]
> RENAN – No, they won't. [inaudible] And of leniency, give more details. The leniency is not clear yet, it is one of the things that has to be included in...
> MACHADO –...In the package.
> RENAN – In the package.
> MACHADO – And it needs to be found, Renan, as it was done in the Amnesty with the military, a process that says: "Let's clean up Brazil, from now on it's like this, backwards..." [clapping hands] Because otherwise, these people will be forever with a sword on their heads, no matter the government, everything is the same. (MACEDO, 2016)

It is important to recall some events related to the progress of the OLJ and the political crisis under discussion. During the 2013 Journeys, then-president Dilma Rousseff proposed five national pacts to meet several popular demands expressed in the protests. Among these pacts was political reform, which, after delays in legislative committees, promoted minor changes. In November 2015, the then PT senator and government leader in the Senate, Delcídio do Amaral, was arrested. At the end of that month, the PGR reported finding documents indicating bribes from the BTG Pactual bank to Eduardo Cunha. On December 2, the PT decided to vote in favor of the Chamber's Ethics Council investigation of Eduardo Cunha's conduct, who, a few hours later, accepted the opening of impeachment proceedings against Dilma Rousseff.

In February 2016, the STF authorized the imprisonment of those convicted in the second instance. On March 4, 2016, Lula was subjected to coercive conduct, and search and seizure operations in Atibaia, Guarujá, and the Lula Institute. On March 15, Delcídio do Amaral's denouncement leaked to the press, citing Lula in alleged obstruction of justice and buying Marcos Valério's silence in the "Mensalão" case. The next day, the former judge Sergio Moro lifted the

telephone confidentiality and released a dialogue in which Dilma and Lula agreed to deliver documents for the nomination of the former President to the Civil Affairs Ministry. Lula's inauguration was prevented by an injunction by Gilmar Mendes.

On May 5, 2016, the STF ordered the removal of deputy Eduardo Cunha. On the 12th, the Senate accepted the opening of Dilma Rousseff's impeachment process. In June, the then OLJ rapporteur at the STF, Minister Teori Zavascki, denied the request of the PGR for the preventive detention of Romero Jucá, Renan Calheiros, and José Sarney. On August 31, 2016, Rousseff was definitively deposed.

On October 11, 2017, the STF ruled that if the court decides to remove a deputy or senator, the decision must be ratified by the respective legislative house. Six days later, the Senate plenary decided to overturn the removal that the First Panel of the STF had imposed on Senator Aécio Neves.

Amid these events, the political reform of 2017 was approved. Senators Aécio Neves and Ricardo Ferraço presented PEC n.36 in July 2016, proposing a political reform restrictive to parties that did not reach a performance clause in the elections. Subsequently, PEC No. 36/2016 became PEC No. 282/2016 in the Chamber, in which PEC No. 84/2011 was appended, which prohibited coalitions in proportional elections.

The political reform from PEC No. 282/2016, approved as Constitutional Amendment No. 97 of 2017, as well as of laws No. 13,487/2017 and No. 13,488/2017, sanctioned in October 2017, aimed to privilege the strongest parties, tying access to resources to the performance clause in elections (BRASIL, 2016; 2017). The justification of PEC 282/2016 summarizes this sense:

> The dispersion of political parties in the National Congress, without new measures to strengthen party identity and loyalty having been effectively implemented, creates difficulties for the functioning of the Legislative Branch and contributes to a greater distance between the population and its representatives. Furthermore, the excessive number of parties represented in Parliament creates problems for governance, as it stimulates the failed coalition presidential system [sic]. (Justification of PEC 282/2016, BRAZIL, 2016, p. 5-6)

Also, the Special Campaign Financing Fund was created, regulating the distribution of resources among the parties and altering the conditions for the payment of electoral fines. According to article 16-D of Law No. 13.488/2017, the sharing of this fund, which was R$ 1.7 billion in 2018, is made as follows: 2% for all parties registered with the Superior Electoral Court (Tribunal Superior Eleitoral - TSE); 35% divided proportionally according to the percentage of ballots for parties with at least one representative in the Chamber of Deputies; 48% divided in proportion to the number of deputies in the chamber, and 15% proportional to the number of senators, in other words, it generates an unequal distribution of resources, favoring the largest and most traditional parties. With articulation of the most important parties and politicians, EC 97/2017 was unanimously approved in the Senate.

This reform indicates the reaction of the political elite to mitigate voter mistrust, maintaining the political status quo. The prohibition of corporate donations, an important source of funds for campaigns until then, also contributed (SILVA & CERVI, 2017). However, bills aiming at regulating the performance of the Public Ministry and the Magistracy do not prosper, such as PL 7032/2017, which proposes the invalidation of sentences and decrees of preventive arrests based on denouncement or other procedures prior to receiving the complaint; PL 7028/2017, which excludes, in legitimate cases for preventive detention, the claim of guarantee of public and economic order; or PL 4372/2016, suggesting that plea agreements can be made, only if the defendant is at liberty.

In a retrospective assessment, it still weighs on the OLJ,

> The systematic violation of the Democratic Rule-of-Law State in relation to the fundamental clauses introduced in Article 5 [...], widely denounced by lawyers and jurists, including international ones. This violation involves the use of torture (through psychological pressure and long term imprisonment without a fixed term, accompanied by degrading treatment) to obtain denouncements as evidence (letter III and LVI); suspension of the principle of presumption of innocence (letter LVII); violation of the right to telephone confidentiality without a valid court order (letter XII); the use of procedural devices to break the rule of the natural judge (letter LIII); violation of the right to ample defense and its witnesses, in addition to the use of coercive conduct without due necessity, etc. (REGO & LOUREIRO, 2018, p. 45-46).[8]

On August 4, 2020, the Second Panel of the STF, composed of ministers Ricardo Lewandowski, Gilmar Mendes, and Edson Fachin, determined the nullity of the former minister Antônio Palocci Filho's denouncement, released to the press on the eve of the vote of the first round of the 2018 elections. Despite the vote of the rapporteur Fachin taking into account that "it is not possible to prove that there was an irregular intention by Moro," Mendes considered that the delay of three months to adjust the agreement to the records, after the homologation, "seems to have been carefully planned by the magistrate to generate a true political fact in the week preceding the first round of the 2018 presidential elections [...] the judicial act is surrounded by serious and irreparable illegality." Lewandowski, on the other hand, states that the way the denouncement was incorporated "embodies, at least, an unequivocal breach of impartiality" (AMORIM, 2020).

Recently, a series of measures by the Attorney General, Augusto Aras, against the OLJ group at the MPF in Curitiba, has publicly stated objectives: "to correct the directions so that "carwashism" does not endure." Aras justifies the need to end the "punitivism" in the MP, to safeguard so that the data of 38,000 people are not used for "blackmail and extortion," "to strengthen scientific investigations [...] aiming to respect fundamental rights and guarantees" (SOUZA, 2020). Aras was nominated, without recourse to the MP's triple list, by President
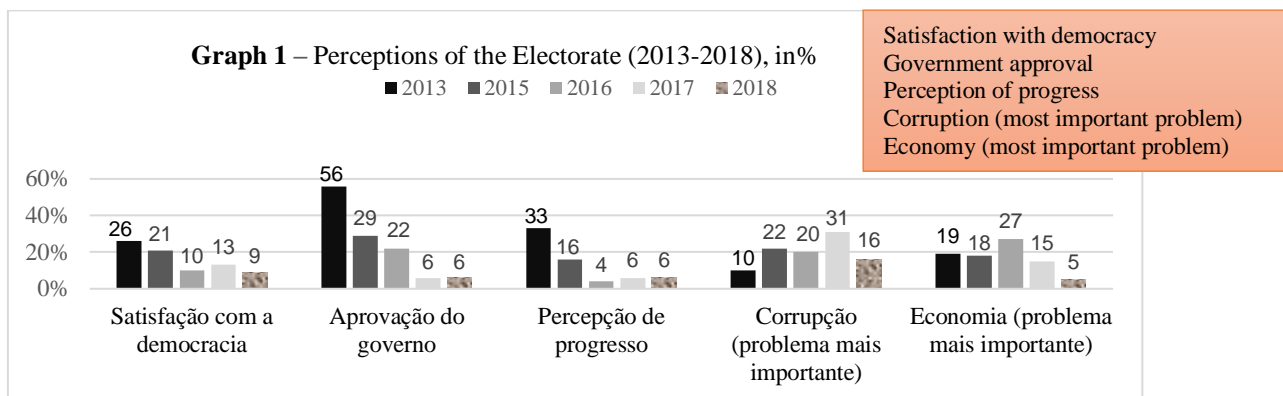
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[8] In this regard, the political class managed to pass the Abuse of Authority Law (Law 13.869/2019) (BRAZIL, 2019).

Bolsonaro, the candidate who best dialogued with the Car Wash base, receiving support from task force promoters and making Minister Sérgio Moro.
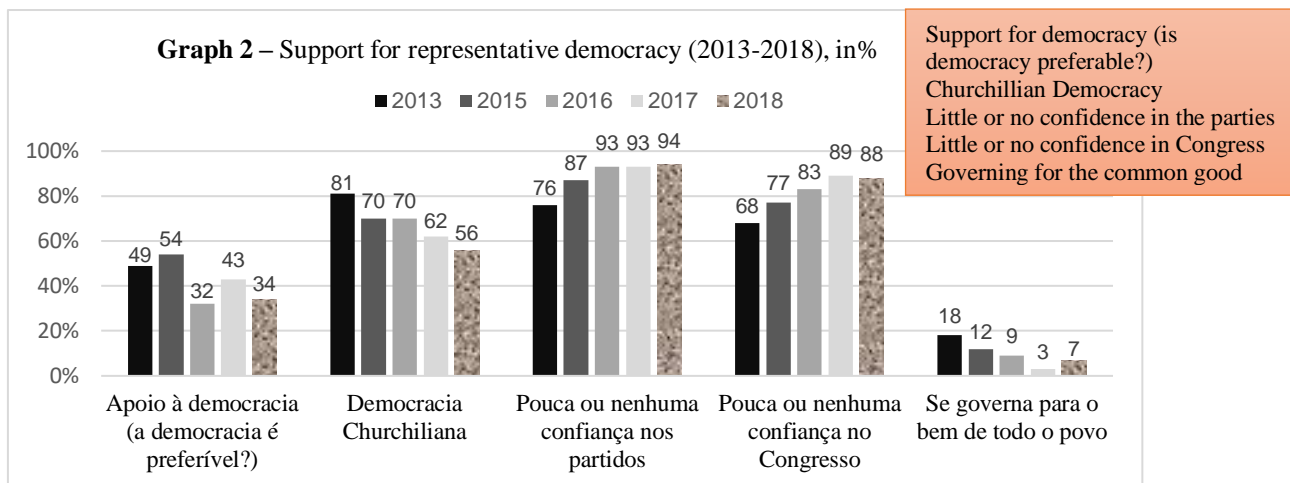
2.3 Changes in public opinion and legitimacy of the political system

Corporación Latinobarómetro surveys, conducted between 2013 and 2018, provide an X-ray of how events in the period affected political demand. Brazil had an average increase in support for democracy between 1995 and 2013, except for 2001, whose result was 30%. However, this support remains above 40% after 2006, reaching 55% in 2009, and 54% in 2010. As of 2013, it is possible to verify a series of changes in the perception of the electorate concerning fundamental elements of democracy. For example, the conviction that the country was a full democracy dropped from 56% in 2013 to 1% in 2017. Let us take a closer look at the data in Graph 1 below.

Graph 1 – Perceptions of the Electorate (2013-2018), in%
■2013 ■2015 ■2016 ■2017 ■2018

Satisfaction with democracy
Government approval
Perception of progress
Corruption (most important problem)
Economy (most important problem)

Source: Elaborated by the authors with data from Latinobarómetro (2014, 2016, 2018, 2019)

That is, corruption took precedence for citizens as the OLJ advanced and exposed the cases with daily and spectacular press coverage, which emphasized leaks of denouncements, coercive conduct, and arrests, except only for the year of Dilma Rousseff's impeachment and the 2018 elections. Note that in 2017, 23% of the electorate considered the country's political situation the biggest problem. In 2018, corruption go down to the second place of the main problems, with health being the first (as in 2013), unemployment third, and the political situation fourth. Between 2017 and 2018, the perception of progress converged to the same percentage of government approval. While satisfaction with democracy remained at very low levels after 2015, with indicators that reveal the deterioration in the degree to which the electorate supports the pillars of representative democracy, as shown in Graph 2 (LATINOBARÓMETRO, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2019).

Graph 2 – Support for representative democracy (2013-2018), in%

■ 2013 ■ 2015 ■ 2016 ▨ 2017 ▨ 2018

Support for democracy (is democracy preferable?)
Churchillian Democracy
Little or no confidence in the parties
Little or no confidence in Congress
Governing for the common good

	Apoio à democracia (a democracia é preferível?)	Democracia Churchiliana	Pouca ou nenhuma confiança nos partidos	Pouca ou nenhuma confiança no Congresso	Se governa para o bem de todo o povo
2013	49	81	76	68	18
2015	54	70	87	77	12
2016	32	70	93	83	9
2017	43	62	93	89	3
2018	34	56	94	88	7

Source: Elaborated by the authors with data from Latinobarómetro (2014, 2016, 2018, 2019)

We have a growing dissatisfaction that results in reduced support for democracy, approaching the worst result in the series (30% in 2001). When questioned about Churchillian[9] democracy, we find a consistent drop in the interviewee's agreement, coinciding with the OLJ's advance, as well as consistently increasing little or no confidence in Congress and parties. All indicators add up to a historical mistrust: in Brazil, institutions govern for a few powerful people, revealing a very low percentage of agreement with the idea that they govern for everyone. We can also verify the significant reduction of this level after the advance of the OLJ (LATINOBARÓMETRO, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2019). These elements relate to reducing attendance and valid ballots, as shown in Graph 3.

Graph 3 – Abstention, and invalid and blank ballots in the 1st Round of the 2010-2018 elections

▨ Abstenção ■ Votos nulos ▨ Votos brancos ▬ TOTAL

Abstention; Invalid ballots; Blank ballots.

	2010	2014	2018
Abstenção	18.12%	19.40%	20.33%
Votos nulos	4.51%	4.67%	6.14%
Votos brancos	2.56%	3.10%	2.65%
TOTAL	25.19%	27.17%	29.12%
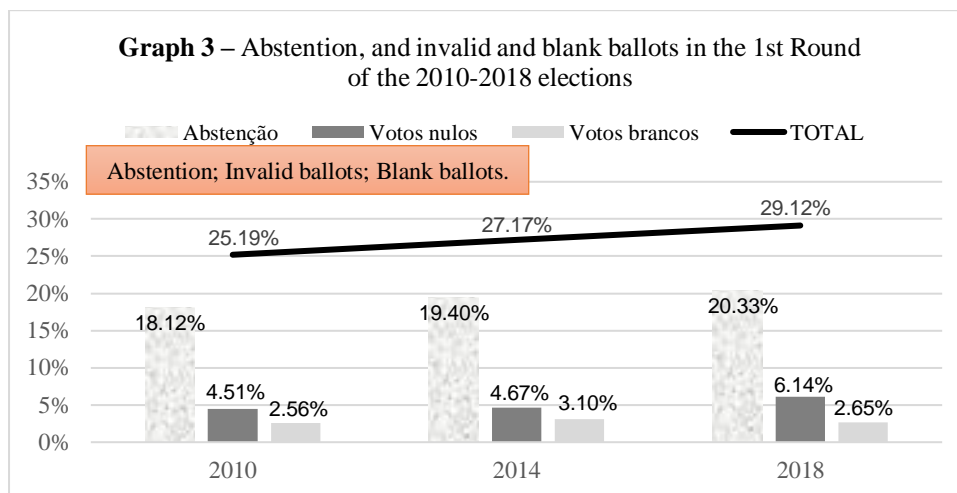
Source: Elaborated by the authors with TSE data (BRASIL, 2010; 2014; 2018)

In this article, we verify the correlation between the operation progress and the impacts on party competition. However, this competition also changes in response to modifications in

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[9] The Churchillian democracy position is the indicator that measures whether respondents agree that democracy can have problems, however it is better than other forms of government.

political demand. In the meantime, the presented data demonstrate the electorate modification on the behavior, opinions, and perceptions. Those also have an impact on the increase of abstention, and in the number of blank and invalid ballots. We cannot affirm that OLJ is the sole cause of this change. However, according to Fábio Sá e Silva (2020), the OLJ Task Force officers produced a "political grammar" feeding the "illiberal turn" experienced by Brazil. These occurred by advocating "the concentration of power in the hands of State officials for the 'greater good' of fighting an existential threat," defending and making positive "a super majoritarian model, in which the law must make politics yield to the aspirations of 'society' [...]" minimizing and disregarding "mechanisms of responsibility when they represented obstacles to the pursuit of this alleged 'greater good' [...]" (SILVA, 2020, p. 4). These factors have practical implications, and the idealization of Moro, Dallagnol, and other members of the task force weakens the concept of a Democratic Rule-of-Law by arguing that they can combat impunity in the country through "a coercive state" (SILVA, 2020, p. 20).

2.4 Changes in the party system

Parties are, according to Aldrich (2011), the only means of collective accountability in democracy. In Brazil, the last elections evidenced the decline of major political parties, the – so-far – successful performance of new political parties, the rise of small political parties, and the various changes in party labels point to the need to understand electoral results that indicate a possible realignment. As for realignment, we adopt Mack's (2010, p. 8) definition, "a substantial, persistent, and widespread transfer of **medial voters**[10] support from one party to another" that occurs due to cultural changes and major social and economic upheaval involving cleavage issues and altering the behavior of a critical mass of voters, persisting for several elections. However, the author also works with the category of sudden realignment, arising in a single **critical election**.

Bardi and Mair (2010, p. 234-235) defend an approach that is concerned, above all, with "interaction patterns." In this way, party systems are more intelligible as multidimensional phenomena and need to be analyzed from three types of division in the party system: vertical, horizontal, and functional[11].

Norris and Inglehart (2019) noticed the rise of populist authoritarianism related to elements alongside "demand" and "supply" in the political system. The elements of "demand" are explained by voters' behavior and attitudes. Although the OLJ impacts supply and demand, we analyze here how its impacts have altered the performance of parties in the functional electoral

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[10] **Medial voters** are those whose main party candidates can reach, but who do not have a fixed support record for candidates from certain parties (MACK, 2010).

[11] Vertical divisions are "associated with **pillarized** polities, [...] or polities with a sharp cleavage." Horizontal divisions "may be associated with strongly decentralized political systems in which the lower units enjoy considerable autonomy." Finally, "party interactions – vary considerably across different functional arenas": parties compete differently in each arena (electoral, parliamentary, and the governing coalition) (BARDI & MAIR, 2010, p.239, **emphasis added**).

arena, affecting party interactions (BARDI & MAIR, 2010), in other words, the supply-side, the competition strategies, and the behavior of the changed parties and politicians, especially in the electoral arena, as the operation advanced on the political elite.

As for the involvement of politicians by parties, take a look at table 1.

**Table 1** – Frequency of those implicated in the OLJ by party.

	Politicians implicated when they were in the Party	Convict	Subject of Investigation	Lawsuit out of the STF	Dismissed and Expired	Cited	Affiliates in 2018
PP/ Progressistas	41	2	17	5	17	0	38
PT	32	6	9	11	6	0	30
PMDB/ MDB	28	3	13	2	7	3	24
PSDB	15	0	5	4	5	1	17
DEM	7	0	1	3	3	0	11
PSD	6	0	0	0	6	0	6
PSB	5	0	2	3	0	0	1
PRB	3	0	1	2	0	0	2
Solidariedade	3	1	2	0	0	0	2
PCdoB	2	0	2	0	0	0	2
PR	2	0	0	2	0	0	3
PTB	2	1	0	0	1	0	2
PTdoB/ Avante	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
PTN/ Podemos	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
PPS	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
PTC	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
PDT	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Non-party	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
TOTAL	150	13	54	32	47	4	150

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2020).

Concerning the results of the 2018 elections, we highlight two points: first, changes in party labels were common in the period, even after the elections, which is one of the mechanisms to maximize interests and minimize costs, by making it difficult for the voter to make collective accountability via the party. (ALDRICH, 2010); second, based on the Laakso and Taagepera (1979)[12] index, the 2014 election result meant 13.49 effective parties and a Rae (1971)[13] index of 0.926, indicating high party fragmentation. In 2018, indexes rose to 16.46 and 0.939, respectively. Take a look at Graph 1.

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[12] The Laakso and Taagepera index (1979) calculates with the formula $1/(\sum pe^2)$ in the Lower Chamber.
[13] The Rae index (1971) calculates with the formula $1 - (\sum pe^2)$ in the Lower Chamber. In an eventual zero result, one party would control all seats; if 1, each seat would be held by a different party.

Graph 4 – Seats in the Chamber by party in the electoral counting act of 2014 and 2018
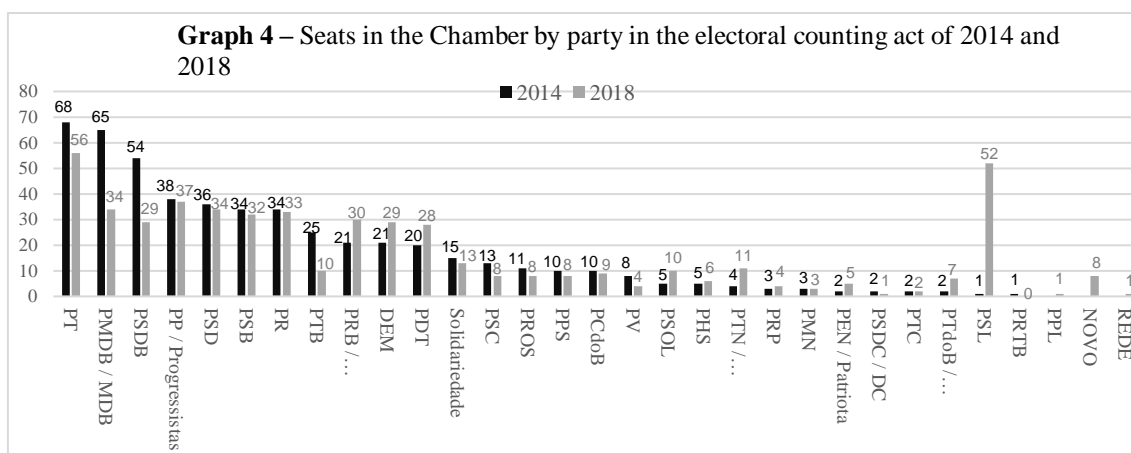
■2014 ■2018

Source: Elaborated by the authors with TSE data (BRASIL, 2014; 2018)

Thus, with the 2018 elections consolidated (without analyzing subsequent movements), the distribution of seats in the Chamber was altered: of the 35 electoral parties, 30 succeeded in becoming parliamentary parties – against 28 parties in 2014; and the main parties suffered significant losses, as shown in the graphs above.

In terms of the number of ballots obtained in 2014 and 2018, Table 2 shows the following:

Table 2 – Variation of ballots between 2014 and 2018 in the Chamber of Deputies

Party	Variation (%)	Party	Variation (%)	Party	Variation (%)
PSL	1341%	PSC	-30%	PCB	-8%
PT	-25%	PV	-21%	PSTU	-78%
PSDB	-47%	PPS	-19%	PCO	-78%
PSD	-4%	PEN/Patriota[i]	115%	PROS	3%
PP/Progressistas[i]	-15%	PHS	51%	PTB	-48%
PMDB/MDB[i]	-50%	PCdoB	-30%	Solidariedade	-27%
PSB	-14%	PRP	17%	PTdoB/AVANTE[i]	123%
PR	-7%	PSDC/DC[i]	27%	PTN/PODEMOS[i]	210%
PRB	13%	PRTB	51%	PMB[ii]	
DEM	12%	PMN	35%	REDE[ii]	
PDT	30%	PTC	78%	NOVO[ii]	
PSOL	59%	PPL	173%		

Source: Elaborated by the authors with TSE data (BRASIL, 2014; 2018)

i Parties that changed their labels in the period (NAME in 2014/NAME in 2018).
ii Parties that did not compete in 2014.

For Abranches (2019), there is a party realignment process taking place after 2006. A realignment that takes place without replacing a previous party system in an electoral round. The arguments to support this idea are: (1) there is a clear and strong shift in the balance of forces between the parties, and (2) the result of the 2018 elections meant a radical shift in government power. Concerning the first argument, Abranches (2019) mentions the results of candidate Marina

Silva who managed, with little television time, to reduce the distance between PT and PSDB, with expressive ballots in 2010 (19.3% through PV) and 2014 (21.3% through PSB). Such results pointed to an imminent depletion of traditional campaign resources. Concerning the second argument, Abranches (2019) verifies ruptures in two planes: (a) the first round accelerates the process that had been taking place gradually since 2010 with the defeat of the PSDB and the decline in the average size of caucuses in the Chamber, increasing party fragmentation in Congress; (b) and, in the second round, the PT was defeated by a candidate affiliated to an inexpressive party with no campaign structure. The process tends to continue with the ban on coalitions in the next proportional elections (ABRANCHES, 2019).

Mack's work aimed to understand and formulate a theory about misalignment in consolidated and institutionalized party systems (MACK, 2010). However, **realignments** can happen even without a previous misalignment occurring.

Therefore, given the data and theoretical assumptions, it is possible to affirm a realignment without a prior abrupt misalignment, which Abranches (2019) states as a gradual process. Thus, note that, **electoral change is often more the result than the cause of party system change**; therefore, the distinction "between processes of electoral change on the one hand, and changes in party systems and the structure of competition, on the other" is central (MAIR, 1997, p. 200). In other words, electoral alignments can change without significantly affecting the structure of the competition. Therefore, without necessarily altering the character of the party system itself. Also, the structure of party competition (and hence the very nature of the party system) could be transformed without any significant prior electoral flux. (MAIR, 1997). However, in the case at hand, we have a change process that happened between 2010-2018, which cannot be explained only by the electoral change resulting in a change in the structure of competition, which is motivated by external factors to the party system. Among these factors is the OLJ, which is correlated with changes or intensifications of electoral behaviors and attitudes, changing demand, which should be explored in due course in new studies. Such changes also force and/or encourage parties to re-articulate their competition strategies, and by altering the patterns of interaction, affect the functional arena of the party system. In summary, the realignment process can and must be explained in terms of supply and demand.

2.5 Use of social media, decentralization of political communication, and advantages of surfing in the anti-PT movement and the denial of politics

Under the exposed political scenario, one of the strategies used by parties and politicians to compete was using alternative resources, breaking with the centrality of traditional campaign resources, such as television time and podium. Among these alternative resources, the use of the internet and social media stands out (ABRANCHES, 2019).

The use of the internet for political struggle began in the 1990s. In that period, left-wing

groups became pioneers in using the world wide web to impact public opinion. Examples of this use are the dissemination of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation and the anti-globalization demonstrations in Seattle, where "the Indymedia or Independent Media Center (IMC) stood out, which formed an alternative network of journalists – a kind of precursor of Mídia Ninja" (MACHADO and MISKOLCI, 2019, p. 948). In that period, in Brazil, Olavo de Carvalho was beginning to gain notoriety by spreading conservative theses and, as a response to Indymedia, "created in 2002 his own alternative information network: Mídia Sem Máscara (MSM) [...] to present his views from a right-wing perspective," besides addressing "from a moralistic perspective topics such as homosexuality, gender, right to bear arms, defense of property, and 'leftism' [...]," mainly through Carvalho's texts (MACHADO & MISKOLCI, 2019, p. 949). Both Indymedia and MSM were tools for political-ideological struggle in an environment in which "visible and massive polarizations" were less likely. However, both were affected by the rise of social media, whose "ease of sharing content from personal profiles" and the "power of algorithms" were fundamental to obtain support "inducing political action," which we see in the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, the June Journeys, among others (MACHADO & MISKOLCI, 2019). From then on:

> Social media and other online commercial platforms have generated not only the already studied phenomena of opinion bubbles or the spread of fake news but something more radical [...] the privatization of politics and its insertion in a moral grammar [...] Such privatization of politics generates collective action that is often anti-institutional with the potential to destabilize democratic contexts (MACHADO and MISKOLCI, 2019, p. 950).

Given this potential, the use of the internet and social media in electoral campaigns results in a window of opportunities that, in addition to being a side effect of the ban on corporate campaign financing, as pointed out by Abranches (2019), may also incur the instrumentalization of polarization of social media, encouraging a radicalizing strategy. As a reaction to the advancement of the OLJ, there was a concentration of traditional resources in the major parties, as the leaders of the major parties led changes in electoral legislation by concentrating money and television time. The excluded politicians and parties saw social media as an alternative, and when migrating their campaign to social media, embarked and reinforced the message of rejection to the political elite. The expressive results of Marina Silva, in 2010 and 2014, already signaled the proximity of the exhaustion of traditional resources. However, it was only in 2018 that there was an organized dissemination with professional agencies, expanding the message reach through bots and sockpuppets[14] (ABRANCHES, 2019).

The know-how accumulated by Cambridge Analytic in the Brexit referendum, in the United Kingdom, and the election of Trump, in the United States, probably were not exclusive to

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[14].Fake accounts created to support or criticize certain positions on social media.

the company, as pointed out by Gaiato (2020). After all, even with the alleged failure of the British company in Brazil, the various measures taken by Facebook already occurred during the elections and the illegal boosting of propaganda, information, and fake news via WhatsApp consisted a complaint reaching the TSE, as reported by Mello (2019). The 2018 electoral dispute will be remembered "for the use of disruptive automation technologies to falsify and distort social media narratives for electoral gains" (RUEDIGER et al, 2019, p. 14).

What differentiates the spread of fake news from similar practices carried out in the past is the mass and instantaneous dissemination. Therefore, using bots and email and WhatsApp dissemination applications are critical factors for the electoral issue. The authors consider that the mass and instantaneous dissemination of fake news impacts on the two dimensions used by voters to define the ballot: (1) agreement with the project and positive evaluation of the record of the candidate or party and (2) elements transmitted by the image of the candidate, such as charisma traits and signs of honesty, reliability, etc. In other words, this alternative has the potential to reaffirm or distort the relationship of the electorate with a project or history of a party, and to affect the image transmitted (RUEDIGER et al, 2019).

Abranches (2019) recalls that digitalization creates a virtual society (cybersphere) in which it develops connections with the real world and is a fertile field for the performance of digital militias and angry individuals who resort to defamation and hate speech. All of this occurred in an electoral scenario with no control over the content trajectory and the intensity of the messages. Besides, in the digital space, political labels without programmatic content circulate easier in a depoliticized and emotionally charged way, favoring the "us" against "them" logic, connecting with the rhetorical style of authoritarian populism (ABRANCHES, 2019; NORRIS & INGLEHART, 2019).

In the meantime, it is necessary to consider another singularity, the anti-PT movement. The rise of the anti-PT movement seems to be linked to the rise of the anti-politics phenomenon, which affects parties and the making of politicians as a whole. As pointed out by Ribeiro, Carreirão, and Borba (2016), using data from the ESEB, there was a more pronounced drop in party preferences concerning the PT in 2014, however, the other parties also experienced such a trend. Borba et al. (2018) noted a significant increase in 2006 and 2014 in the share of the electorate that perceives little distinction between the parties or that sees no use in them[15], suggesting the existence of a cyclical variation since in 2005/2006 there was the Mensalão scandal, and in 2013/2014 the June Journeys occur, and the OLJ begins. Contrary to the Brazilian environment at the beginning of the OLJ, however, the Mensalão scandal took place in a growth cycle with growing surpluses in public accounts, which allowed combining expansion of social spending with fiscal stability (ABRANCHES, 2018; IANONI, 2016; SINGER, 2010).

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[15] The authors use the terms "indifferentiation" and "alienation" to describe such behaviors.

The combination of these conjunctural factors, conditioning, to some extent, the magnitude of the OLJ's reflexes in the political system, the very nature of the operation, and the rise of groups from the new right-wing caused a twist that disrupted the political party organization and the electoral strategies in Brazil. The engine of this twist is the denial of politics, catalyzed by the OLJ, based on the feeling that national problems are almost entirely generated by corruption, intrinsic to the making of politics and politicians, at least the "politics of always" and the "politicians of always." The anti-PT movement, in this equation, can be understood, partly as an intervening phenomenon and partly as an expression of this phenomenon.

These strategies, therefore, are amplified from a long process of "discrediting" the political elite, making fake news credible to a significant portion of the population in the measure that "them" against the "us" that should mobilize is, not only the other side of the dispute but, rather, the corrupt or the conniving with "unprecedented" corruption, whose the OLJ coincidence with the economic crisis, created the feeling that the money has ended because of the work of corruption, that is, the crisis is creating reasons for the accumulation of popular dissatisfaction since 2013, catalyzed by the OLJ, mobilized and intensified, especially by digital means (BARROS, 2019).

3 The Car Wash operation and the aspects of the destabilization of the party system

This section presents how the operation contributed to the realignment of the party system, evidenced by the victory of the one who incarnated the Car Wash aspirations. The selection criteria of the politicians followed the parameter of these being related to the lawsuits belonging to the OLJ, thus, the following categories were separated within the variable called "status": I. the defendant was acquitted; II. the lawsuit was closed; III. directly mentioned in any lawsuit; IV. subject of investigation; V. the lawsuit went out of the STF in favor of lower courts; VI. convicted. The cases in which the lawsuit was on trial were grouped with those under investigation.

With Pearson's chi-squared test, we evaluated the association between the variable "status" and the variable "party situation," which indicates whether, after being linked to the OLJ: I. the politician changed party; II. their party has changed the label, or III. they stayed in the same party, and it kept the label. Here, due to their low number, five cases that left their respective parties and did not join others were omitted. The variable "ran" indicates whether the politician has run for office after being publicly related to the OLJ and what the result of his campaign is. We have the values: I. no; II. yes, they lost, and III. yes, they won. With the testing and analysis of secondary data, we seek to declare to what extent the link with the OLJ had an impact on the strategies employed by political actors.

The tables in this section were prepared using the IBM SPSS Statistics software. The analyzed data were collected between July and August 2019. The **n** totals 150 cases whose

situation the OLJ is distributed according to table 3, on the following page:

Table 3 – Status concerning the OLJ

		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulatuve Percentage (%)
	Dismissed (expired)	6	4.0%	4.4%	4.4%
	Dismissed	41	27.3%	29.9%	34.3%
	Mentioned	4	2.7%	2.9%	37.2%
Valid	**Subject of Investigation**	54	36.0%	39.4%	76.6%
	Lawsuit out of the STF	32	21.3%	23.4%	100.0%
	Valid Total	137	91.3%	100.0%	-
Omitted	**Convicted**	13	8.7%	-	-
	Total	**150**	**100.0%**	-	-

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2020).

According to table 4, of the cases analyzed, 32.7% did not run, including the convicted, ineligible under the "Clean Record Law" (Lei da Ficha Limpa). Also, 38% were defeated, and 29.3% were successful in the electoral dispute.

Table 4 – Did they run after being implicated in the OLJ?

		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulatuve Percentage (%)
	No	49	32.7%	32.7%
Valid	**Yes, but they lost**	57	38.0%	70.7%
	Yes, and they won	44	29.3%	100.0%
	Total	**150**	**100.0%**	-

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2020).

In table 5 we can see how the participation in the elections is distributed by "status concerning the OLJ," excluding from the sample the convicted candidates, therefore, ineligible. Note that the small *n* impacts on significance so that it is not possible to state the table's result as "probably true," but this table, associated with other tests and data, helps to understand the correlation between the OLJ status, participation, or not in the elections, and the electoral result.

Table 5 – Ran after being implicated in the OLJ versus status in the operation

		Dismissed	Mentioned or Subject of Investigation	Lawsuit out of the STF	Total
RAN AFTER BEING IMPLICATED IN THE OLJ	**No**	9 (19.1%)	21 (36.2%)	6 (18.8%)	36 (26.3%)
	Yes, but they lost	22 (46.8%)	20 (34.5%)	15 (46.9%)	57 (41.6%)
	Yes, and they won	16 (34.0%)	17 (29.3%)	11 (34.4%)	44 (32.1%)
TOTAL	**Total**	47	58	32	**137**

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2020).

* p value = 0.263

We also should consider the party movement of the politicians involved in the OLJ. Of these, 6 politicians were without party affiliation at the time of the data collection, 12 changed parties, 61 remained in the political parties, and these changed their labels, and 71 were in the same party maintaining their political parties, as shown in table 6.

Table 6 – Party situation

		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulatuve Percentage (%)
	Without party affiliation	6	4.0%	3.3%
	Changed party	12	8.0%	13.3%
Valid	**Party changed label**	61	40.7%	56.7%
	Same party and label	71	47.3%	100.0%
	Total	150	100.0%	-

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2020).

Of the 12 that changed, 9 went to parties whose labels were the same since the beginning of the OLJ and 3 to parties with new labels. Take a look at Table 7:

Table 7 – Has the party in the 2018 elections changed the label since the OLJ began?

		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulatuve Percentage (%)
	Without party affiliation	5	3.3%	3.3%
Valid	**No**	74	49.3%	52.7%
	Yes	71	47.3%	100.0%
	Total	150	100.0%	-

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2020).

Table 8 shows the result of cross-referencing the party situation data with the status concerning the OLJ, excluding convicted politicians (who were prevented from running) and two politicians implicated, without conviction, but who were not affiliated with any party. The table shows statistical correlation, and together with other tests and data, it helps to understand the OLJ correlation with alterations analyzed here.

Table 8– Changed party versus the OLJ status

		Dismissed	Mentioned or Subject of Investigation	Lawsuit out of the STF	Total
CHANGED PARTY	**Changed Party**	5 (10.9%)	4 (7.0%)	3 (9.4%)	15 (11.1%)
	Party changed label	19 (41.3%)	32 (56.1%)	7 (21.9%)	61 (45.1%)
	Same party and label	22 (47.8%)	21 (36.8%)	22 (68.8%)	59 (43.7%)
	Total	45	58	32	135

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2020).

* p value = 0.034

Table 9 crosses the politician status, excluding those mentioned, with the variable "party changed label," indicating whether the politician's party in the election had a change in the legend between 2014 and the 2018 elections. The presented test showed statistical significance for a relationship between the two variables (0.016).

Table 9: The current party changed its name since the start of the OLJ versus the politician status in the OLJ

| | | STATUS OF THE POLITICIAN IN THE OLJ | | | |
		Dismissed	Mentioned or Subject of Investigation	Lawsuit out of the STF	Total
HAS THE CURRENT PARTY CHANGED ITS NAME SINCE THE START OF THE OLJ	No	24 (53.3%)	20 (37.0%)	22 (68.8%)	66 (50.3%)
	Yes	21 (46.7%)	34 (63.0%)	10 (31.3%)	65 (49.7%)
	Total	45	54	32	131

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2020).

* p value = 0.016

The analysis of tables 8 and 9, together, brings two conclusions: (I) those who have the lawsuit disconnected from the STF in favor of courts in the states, such as the TREs (when the crime is related to slush fund) and where the media coverage is less intense, tend to be the same ones that remain in the parties without changing the label; (II) subjects of investigation in the STF tend to change parties more or belong to parties that have changed labels.

Table 10 below shows the positions held by politicians with some implications in the OLJ at the time of data collection.

Table 10 – Current position

		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulatuve Percentage (%)
	Out of office	89	59.3%	59.3%
	City Councilor	2	1.3%	60.6%
	Mayor	3	2.0%	62.6%
	State Deputy	1	0.7%	63.3%
Valid	Vice-Governor	2	1.3%	64.7%
	Governor	5	3.3%	68.0%
	Federal Deputy	32	21.3%	89.3%
	Senator	15	10.0%	99.3%
	Minister	1	0.7%	100.0%
	Total	150	100.0%	-

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2020).

More than half of the politicians implicated in the OLJ are out of office and 49 (32.7%) did not run for office in 2018. As a comparison, 25.5% of federal deputies did not attempt re-election. Among the implicated politicians who did not run, are the 13 convicts (ineligible under the "Clean Record Law") and some politicians with an ongoing term of office (city councilor, mayor, and senator). Of the politicians implicated and able to run, only 44 ran and won, while 57 were defeated, and 36 did not run. Additionally, there is a significant correlation between the exchange of parties and the option for a party that changed the label throughout the OLJ in an attempt to mitigate the effects of the operation, as shown in tables 7 and 8. Considering only those involved in the OLJ able to run, there is no significant difference comparing federal deputies who did not run – 26.3% and 25.5%, respectively. However, even with this resource, of the 101 that ran, only 43.56% won. Of the 513 deputies, 382 tried re-election, and 240 (or 62.8%) were successful (CALGARO, MAZUI & GARCIA, 2018). We affirm, from the data set, the correlation between the OLJ and the increase in costs for re-election, even with the measures of the political elite in reaction to the impacts of the operation that aimed to reduce the electorate's ability to promote accountability through ballots.

4 Final considerations

The institutional response of the political class to the OLJ, in the first place, occurred through political reform. The institutional incentives produced by the reform, namely, the relative increase in the economic-electoral power of major parties, compared to the small parties, ended up not being sufficient to stop the anti-politics phenomenon in relation to the fall in the election of traditional figures and the number of elected representatives of traditional parties. Besides, it is important to observe the dynamics of candidates' movements with any involvement in the OLJ. We can verify a dependence between the two variables (0.016) and the analysis of the proportions, bringing two conclusions: (I) those who have the lawsuit disengaged from the STF, in favor of state courts, in which the media coverage is less intense, tend to be the same to remain in their parties with the same label; (II) those who are the subject of an investigation (in the STF) tend to change parties more or belong to parties that have changed labels. We also note that parties with convicted politicians in the OLJ suffered a reduction in the ballots received and lost seats in the Chamber in 2018, compared to the 2014 elections.

Therefore, we argue that the effect of delegitimizing the political class and parties before public opinion, provoked by the OLJ, resulted in a higher overall renewal rate. In the Chamber, of the 513 deputies, 25.5% did not even run; of the 382 who tried re-election, 240 or 62.8% were successful. Among the subjects of investigation or mentioned, 26.3% of the total did not even run, and the success rate is only 46% of the competitors. Those indicates a loss of electoral potential in the cases. Although we can see a loss of medial voters in the main parties in the country, there is no theoretical basis to discuss misalignment. The central point of the observation

is to verify if the trend of loss of medial voters will continue, reverse, or if 2018 was the critical election, marking a new voting plateau for these political parties, in other words, to monitor the system realignment process – which, according to Mack (2010), can occur without a prior misalignment.

Another point is the success of the smaller parties, especially those that chose to change their labels. As a result, it went from 13.49 effective parties in the 2014 elections to 16.46 in 2018. Also, the party fractionalization index went from 0.926 to 0.939 considering the 2014 and 2018 electoral results.

Changing the label did not have the same effect for the MDB as it did for smaller parties. On the one hand, because the change was small, seeking to return to the origins of the political party itself and not an update of principles and commitments connected with current demands. Also, given the impossibility of medium and long-term forecasts, politicians and traditional parties, such as the MDB and the PSDB (which did not change the label), could not measure the costs of the continuing economic crisis, the growing spectacularization of the OLJ, and the distress for supporting the Temer government, which, without the scrutiny of the ballot box, implemented an unpopular reform agenda. All this added to the maintenance of the same public faces, gave the electorate the full capacity to promote collective accountability (ALDRICH, 2011).

Finally, we found that leaving the party or competing in parties that changed the labels had no significant effect on the competitors: the percentage of re-election was around 30%, regardless of staying in the party with the same label, running for a party with a new label, or migrating to other parties. However, the percentage of candidates who decided not to run is higher among those who remained in the party, differentiating the success rate: 42.8% of those who ran in new parties or labels win, against 45.4% of those who ran in the same parties with the same label. This difference may be associated with the fact that those with higher permanence had cases referred to the first instance. Still, the success rate is lower than the 62.8% of the overall for the Chamber. Therefore, individual accountability has not been diminished by the change of the political party or label.

The impacts of the OLJ on the Brazilian political system go beyond the simple accountability of political agents who committed illicit acts. It created, with the tendency to deny politics and the use of social media as a backdrop, a movement of greater discredit of political parties and the favoring of populist figures. The theme deserves continuous study, and it will take some time to be fully understood, just as in Italy, the Mani Pulite is the object of research and debate until today.

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